MAINE -- 2001 Real Choice Systems Change Grant

Identified Problems with the States' Long-Term Care System

- Service provision is not person-centered and service options are fairly rigid. The opportunity for consumer choice and control varies across programs and there is a lack of administrative support for employer functions.

- Quality assurance systems are not relevant to community living. Quality is assessed by determining if programs meet program requirement rather than by assessing quality of life outcomes. There is also a lack of coordination around quality assurance activities across departments.

- Lack of access to, and availability of, key community supports, including accurate information about options, housing, transportation, recreation resources, and personal assistant workers.

- Inability to link data across departments makes planning difficult. In particular, there is no system to provide unduplicated data on persons served, services provided, and providers.

Perceived Strengths

- History of supporting community services for people of all ages with disabilities.

- Reduction in the number of licensed nursing home beds and Medicaid use of nursing homes.

- Closure of Pineland Center, the only large-scale state institution for persons with developmental disabilities, and a reduction in the number of persons residing in ICFs-MR.

- Reduction in the use of state mental health institutions (at Bangor and Augusta) to an average combined daily census of about 200 persons.

- Reduction in the number of children who are sent to out-of-state residential treatment facilities to 120 children in 2000.

Primary Focus of Grant Activities

- Provide consumers with greater choice and control over the services they receive.

- Develop community-relevant quality management structures that incorporate consumer perspectives.

- Address problems with services and supports identified as weak links in the system because they are either inconsistently available or inaccessible to people with disabilities (e.g., direct care workforce shortages, lack of housing, limited access to transportation, and low participation of people with disabilities in recreational and cultural events).

- Facilitate interdepartmental collaboration by developing an integrated data capacity.

Goals, Objectives, and Activities

Overall Goal. To enhance the community-based service system through greater consumer choice, enhanced quality of community-based living options, increased access to, and availability of, services and supports, and data integration.

Goal A-1. Maximize options for consumer choice and control of personal assistance services across the state's PAS programs.

Objectives/Activities

- Review state PAS policy for inconsistencies across programs.
- Develop impact statements, legal analysis, and recommendations for consideration.
- Work with federal agencies or state legislature to obtain necessary waivers or changes in law.

Goal A-2. Develop Independent Service Organizations (ISOs) to provide more consumers with administrative supports needed to exercise choice and control over services.

Objectives/Activities

- Create one or more ISOs to offer consumers a menu of administrative supports (e.g., payroll and tax withholding, workers' compensation).
- Amend HCBS waivers, state Medicaid, and other program rules to incorporate ISO option.

Goal A-3. Increase flexibility of services by allowing consumers to pool service dollars across programs and purchase services of their choice.

Objectives/Activities

- Develop a methodology for allocating resources to individuals.
- Identify and address state and federal policy barriers to offering a portable funding option.

Goal A-4. Increase effectiveness of services targeted to children in public schools with emotional, behavioral, or mental health disabilities.

Objectives/Activities

- Support ongoing effort of the Portland Public Schools, state agency personnel, and a group of service providers in providing wraparound services to Portland children.
- Support effort by providing teacher training on Wrap-around Coalition, information (brochure) to families, and an evaluation of the coalition and its effectiveness.

Goal B-1. Develop quality indicators for community living that can be used across programs.

Objectives/Activities

- Involve consumers, experts, and policymakers in the development of the quality indicators.
- Implement the indicators through development of operational definitions and data collection methods, and design and implement reporting mechanisms.

Goal B-2. Demonstrate the feasibility and efficacy of interdepartmental collaboration on quality improvement, and build interdepartmental support and infrastructure for such efforts.

Objectives/Activities

Implement two improvement projects that cross program boundaries.

Goal C-1. Improve access to information about services for people of all ages with disabilities and simplify the process of choosing services.

Objectives/Activities

Develop a web site that provides current information about services.

Goal C-2. Improve access to community housing for people with all types of disabilities.

Objectives/Activities

Develop and implement at least two housing demonstration projects.

Goal C-3. Increase the availability of qualified personal assistance workers in Maine.

Objectives/Activities

Create a self-sustaining, independent Personal Assistance Workers Guild that will provide benefits, support, continuing education, and advocacy for its members.

Goal C-4. Expand opportunities for integrated recreational and social/cultural activities.

Objectives/Activities

- Replicate Portland Connections (monthly calendar of low-cost recreational events) and create similar services in at least one new community per year for three years.

- Develop and disseminate Universal Access Guidelines Tool Kit for Recreational Facilities.

Goal C-5. Make transportation more available to persons with disabilities.

Objectives/Activities

Design and implement at least two transportation demonstration projects (flexible transportation budgets, detailed pricing options, and ride share).

Goal D-1. Improve the state's ability to plan and implement services for persons with disabilities by integrating data across departments.

Objectives/Activities

Develop a shared data system and seek development funds for implementation.

Key Activities and Products

- Conduct a comparative analysis of Maine's PAS policies and develop recommendations for change.

- Develop an independent service organization.

- Evaluate the wrap-around services program underway in Portland Public Schools.

- Identify, and implement the use of, indicators measuring quality of care and quality of life.
- Identify and conduct two interdepartmental collaborative quality improvement projects.
- Develop a web site providing information about services, resources, and eligibility.
- Conduct two to three demonstrations for improving access to housing services.
- Develop a direct care workers' guild.
- Develop a resource inventory for recreation services, replicate a monthly calendar of low-cost events, and develop a Universal Access Guidelines Tool Kit.
- Conduct two to three demonstrations for improving access to transportation services.
- Develop a detailed design for generic infrastructure to support integrating data across multiple departments and programs.

Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Planning Activities

- Input from consumers and family members gathered through focus groups (to support the Work Group's planning process) informed the work of the Olmstead planning group
- .The Olmstead planning group, the Work Group for Community-Based Living, includes 16 consumers and family members with disabilities of all types, created a special committee to develop and prioritize activities for this grant proposal.

Consumer Partners and Consumer Involvement in Implementation Activities

- Consumer partnerships will be broadened beyond the membership of the Work Group through the creation of four technical advisory groups (TAGs) that will provide input and expertise for all projects under the grant. TAGs will also be involved in project evaluation activities, reviewing project data and recommending changes as needed.
- In addition to the TAGs, consumer input and guidance will be sought through affinity and focus groups (identifying the quality domains, guiding the choice of quality indicators); for developing content and beta testing the web site; and as part of project-specific resource teams.

Public Partners

- Bureau of Elder and Adult Services.
- Department of Education (special education).
- Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services (services and supports to children with emotional disabilities, mental retardation, developmental disabilities; adults with mental retardation and autism; persons with addiction disorders (all ages).
- Department of Labor's Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (vocational rehabilitation).
- Department of Corrections (counseling to adults and juveniles in the correctional system).

Private Partners and Subcontractors

- Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine.
- Center for Community Inclusion.
- TANerprise, Inc., Systems Engineering, Inc. (SEI), Client Network Services, Inc. (CNSI).
- Wraparound Coalition, Portland Public Schools.

Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in the Planning Phase

- Public partners were invited to be part of the sub-group responsible for developing and refining ideas, prioritizing and reviewing drafts.

- Private partners participated in drafting the proposal.

- The Statewide Independent Living Council's (SILC) planning summit was used as an informal opportunity to gather information and solicit ideas.

Public and Private Partnership Development/Involvement in Implementation

- Public partners are members of the Work Group, serving as the over-arching advisory groups to the project. Representatives from state agencies also serve on the TAGs.

- Departments involved with Maine's TWWIIA activities will work to coordinate activities on this project.

- The Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine will provide leadership and staff support for the project through a cooperative agreement.

- The Center for Community Inclusion will conduct focus and affinity groups to identify quality domains that will govern the selection of quality indicators.

- TANerprise, Inc. will partner in the data integration effort as a subcontractor to the Muskie School.

Existing Partnerships That Will Be Utilized to Leverage or Support Project Activities

- The TWWIIA Advisory Council and the Work Group for Community-Based Living share membership, which will ensure coordination of effort at the advisory board level.

- Grant activities will facilitate the work of the Wrap-around Coalition, which provides services to children.

Oversight/Advisory Committee

- A PI from the Bureau of Medical Services will oversee the project.

- The Work Group for Community-Based Living will serve as the consumer advisory group for the project and will monitor the progress of the grant activities. The Muskie School staff will support its work.

Formative Learning and Evaluation Activities

- The four TAGs will establish evaluation criteria for each project activity, assess whether those criteria were met throughout the three year grant period, and recommend changes based on whether or not original criteria were met.

- The development of quality indicators for community living will provide a tool for subsequent assessments of Maine's community system.

Evidence of Enduring Change/Sustainability

Many of the grant's activities will endure and be sustainable beyond the grant period.

- Revisions to program rules that give consumers more choice and options.

- Independent Service Organizations and other administrative structures that enable more consumers to exercise choice.

- A new quality indicator system that is relevant to consumers living in the community.

- Elevation of the status of the profession of personal care assistants, improved working conditions and education opportunities through the Personal Assistance Worker Guild.

- Program data that is integrated across departments, facilitating interdepartmental collaboration on planning and program management to ensure that bureaucratic boundaries are invisible to consumers, particularly those who access multiple programs.

- ISOs and PASG will support themselves through administrative fees based on the services they provide.

- The quality indicator data that is collected will be part of the data integration project and it is anticipated that the demand for the integrated data will be high once agencies being using it in planning, quality improvement, and program operations.

- Permanent changes that towns make in their recreation program facilities and marketing efforts to attract more people with disabilities.

Geographic Focus

Statewide.